

Pondering Point

With so much to do in a day, many of us never find any free time to do what makes us happy. Still, there are others who manage to get everything done and still find time to read that forgotten book or visit that special friend. Since we all have the same 24 hours in a day, how do they do it? The answer is in the art of mastering a routine.

While many associate routines with the loss of spontaneity, they actually play a very positive role in time management. The power of executing daily and weekly routines can actually free up time and put regular tasks into automation, freeing up our minds and allowing us to work more efficiently. Routines can be beneficial to our overall mental health by regulating our stress levels and providing us with the necessary amount of stability we use to help structure our day. As guides, they help us remain focused and productive. Learning how to be flexible with these routines can actually invite spontaneity and make changes in our day easier to handle.

Routines can have a significant influence on our lives – for better or worse. Since not all routines can impact us positively, reviewing those behaviors can answer questions like, “Is this activity ethical?” “Is this healthy and beneficial to me?” “Is this task necessary to my productivity or can I take it off my plate?”

When we allow routines to help automate our regular tasks, we ensure necessary projects don't slip through the cracks and we can make the most use of our waking hours. We now have more control of our day and can celebrate the spare time we have freed up by reading that book, watching that movie or... doing nothing at all!

Are you CONTROLLING your day?

Prioritize, Organize & Routine-ize!



Imagine... going to bed at night feeling confident that you made the most of your day and accomplished everything you set out to do.

— From Pondering to Practice —

Activity

How do you keep track of the minutia?

Try This → Create an Action List

- Make a brief list of the routine tasks that you do each day. (showering, having coffee, checking email, etc...)
 - *Are the most time-consuming projects necessary now, or can they be postponed?*
- Think of the existing habits you already engage in.
- Think about adding new things that you wish were part of your routine, like going to the gym.
 - *Can you find time now to schedule those things into your routine?*
- Try putting up post-its around the house or your office/cubicle (if possible) to remind you to get a task done.
 - *Leave it up every day until you feel confident that you will remember to do it.*
- Now, share your routine with someone else and ask them how they organize their day.
 - *Can you learn something from their routine that you can use in yours?*

The trick is to blend your old rituals with new habits into a routine to help your day run on automatic pilot!

Self Reflection Activity

- Everybody is different – some people like more routine and some prefer less with more flexibility.
 - *What do you like? What works for you?*
- *How do you maintain your routines and keep them fresh?*
 - *Can you do the same task, maybe a different way?*
- *How do you start up a routine that you may have abandoned?*
- *Do you consistently miss certain routine items?*
 - *Why?*
 - *Do you feel it is still necessary and/or relevant to the success of your day?*

“The secret of your future is hidden in your daily routine.”

- Mike Murdock